

Comment on the proposed conservation of the specific names of *Strombidium gyrans* Stokes, 1887 (currently *Strobilidium gyrans*) and *Strobilidium caudatum* Kahl, 1932 (Ciliophora, Oligotrichida)

(Case 3011; see BZN 55: 6–8, 233–236)

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In attempting to focus ecological studies on the living components of ecosystems, I have noted that many students are encouraged to substitute various numerical formulas for the names of the species they are encountering. They are deterred from attempting to identify the organisms with their proper binominal names by difficulties in determining which of the names encountered in the literature are the valid ones. It is clear from a study of entries in *Zoological Record* that authors are now divided almost equally on whether to use *S. gyrans* or *S. caudatum*, and there is a danger that the names will be treated as if referring to different taxa.

In disagreeing with the application to conserve the names of ciliate species that have been in continual use for the better part of a century, both Foissner and Corliss pay lip service to the need to maintain stability in biological nomenclature but fail to recognize the present confusion that the resurrection of forgotten names has introduced into the literature. In effect they are saying that because few scientists are working on the taxonomy of ciliates, those who are should be free to arbitrarily and capriciously choose any names from synonym lists they wish without having to take note of current usage.

The serious confusion caused by the resurrection of the nomen dubium, *Strombidion caudatum* Fromentel, 1876, also involves the brackish water species *Strobilidium caudatum* Kahl, 1932. For five years following Foissner's rejection in 1987 of *Strobilidium gyrans*, *S. caudatum* Kahl was left with a specific name that would have to be regarded as invalid because it was preoccupied by Fromentel's name. In 1992, Petz & Foissner attempted to remedy this situation by giving the species the name *Strobilidium kahli*. However, the generic name *Rimostrombidium* had been proposed in 1978 by Jankowski for the group to which this brackish water species belongs (Agatha & Riedel-Lorje, 1998, p. 10). Giving the species a new specific name was therefore unnecessary, and the name *kahli* must be regarded as invalid on the grounds that Kahl's specific name *caudatum* has priority, the preoccupation having been eliminated by removal of the species from the genus *Strobilidium*. However, should *Rimostrombidium* be reduced to a subgenus of *Strobilidium* at any time in the future, the problem of secondary homonymy would arise again.

With regard to the specific name that has long been regarded as the only valid name of the freshwater species, *Strobilidium gyrans* (Stokes, 1887), neither Foissner nor Corliss address the core of the issue. Foissner maintains that the valid name of the species should be *Strobilidium caudatum* (Fromentel, 1876) because it enjoys priority, a fact that Kahl (1932) is said to have simply overlooked. In fact, this was not the case. Kahl (p. 510) listed Fromentel's name as an invalid synonym because he regarded Fromentel's description as inadequate for recognizing the species and